

HOW TO PASS THE BATON SO IT MAKES IT TO THE FOURTH GENERATION

Pt. 2

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I. THE FATHER'S PART IN HANDING OFF THE BATON

A. Traditions Are the Key

- 1. Traditions, by their very nature, should be unchangeable so as to root a person into the soil of their family and ancestors even though the world around them is running at an ever quickening pace.** Without them, people will constantly be searching for who they are.
2. Otis Ledbetter and Kurt Bruner, in their book Your Heritage defined Tradition as **the practice of handing down stories, beliefs, and customs from one generation to another in order to establish and reinforce a strong sense of identity.**
3. Judges 20:10-15
4. Dr. James Dobson's father once said before he died
I have observed that the greatest delusion is to suppose that our children will be devout Christians simply because their parents have been, or that any of them will enter into the Christian faith in any other way than through their parents' deep travail of prayer and faith."
5. Were you aware that Jesus, John the Baptist, the apostle Peter, and the patriarch Moses, all called their generations "evil" "rebellious" "sinful" "wicked" "adulterous" "faithless" "perverse" "stubborn" "cursed" "crooked" "grieved" and "a generation of vipers."
6. Jesus condemned his generation as faithless, and that it would reap all the consequences for all the shed blood of all the righteous men who ever were martyred from Abel on! He said they were so closed that they refused to respond if the pipers played dance songs (were unable to fully enter into rejoicing) or funeral songs (unable to mourn).
7. Proverbs 22:6

B. There are six principle ways to ensure the baton gets passed, and continues to be passed to the third and fourth generations.

#1: Pass on a Spiritual Legacy

1. *Your Heritage: How to Be Intentional about the Legacy You Leave*, and its authors are J. Otis Ledbetter and Kurt Bruner. They write that a **heritage** –

“...is the spiritual, emotional and social legacy that is passed from parent to child...good or bad.”¹

2. A spiritual legacy is defined as -

“...the process whereby parents model and reinforce the unseen realities of the spiritual life.”²

3. Example: Father who didn't believe in wearing his faith on his shirt sleeve...

#2: Passing On An Emotional Legacy

1. The second thing that needs to be done in order to pass on a godly legacy is to create an **“enduring sense of security and emotional stability, nurtured in an environment of safety and love.”³** An emotional legacy creates an environment of love and protection which increases our children's odds of survival in a hostile and unsympathetic world. In such a family, children develop healthy emotions that will help them respond to and work through in positive ways the traumas and difficulties of life.
2. Gary Smalley and John Trent wrote a book entitled *THE BLESSING*, in which they wrote that the two necessary ingredients in passing on blessing to one's children (among others) was physical affection and verbal affirmation. Indeed, these two things are so necessary in developing healthy emotions in our kids that they seem to cover a multitude of Parental goofs.
3. In families where there are healthy displays of physical affection between mom and dad, and between parents and children, and between siblings, and where there is plenty of verbal affirmation and blessing, there a strong emotional legacy is passed down. Though as parents we can't keep trouble from coming near our children, raising them in a positive, emotional environment is tantamount

¹ J. Otis Ledbetter and Kurt D. Bruner. *Your Heritage: How to Be Intentional about the Legacy You Leave*. ChariotVictor Publishing, A Division of Cook Communications, Colorado Springs, CO 80918. 1998. P. 27

² Ibid, the authors quotation of Noah Webster's *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828). p. 41

³ Ibid, 60

to building a strong internal armor that will enable them to absorb emotional blows and disappointments and face and deal with the tough challenges that will face them in the future with confidence and optimism.

4. Every family should give off it's own familiar fragrance. The Family Fragrance are those smells that trigger the memories of our children when they are away from home that bring to their mind those things we are seeking to pass on to them. But it takes more than smells and odors. It also takes other things accompanying them to cause them to pass on our traditions and legacies.

A Affection – (do your children enjoy touching you? Are open demonstrations of affection characteristic of your family? Physical affection is another way to talk about “meaningful touch.”

R Respect – Billy Graham once said that a child who is allowed to be disrespectful to their parents will not have true respect for anyone. There are two kinds of respect we need to reinforce at home:

- 1) **entitled respect** (that which is due a person because of their position or title; in other words, their position, or rank, or title, entitles them your respect- ie – government officials; military soldiers, spiritual authorities, etc – 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7; children should learn this by first having it modeled to them by their parents; as an adult you never denigrate or disrespect an entitled official; your parents, or your spouse; or the elderly, or religious leaders)

- 2) and **earned respect** which comes from what we do. The word “Earn” comes from “earnest” and “yearn” in which the primary meaning is to strive with effort to advance or stretch forward. This kind of respect has been earned through something laudable, through labor, service, performance, advancement. Respect that is fostered by parents example and taught as a value in the home, will dramatically affect all three areas of the heritage your passing down – spiritually, emotionally and socially. **Spiritually**, it will give a child

a sense of true value about himself because of his attitude toward his creator; **emotionally** it will give a strong sense of security; and **socially** it will establish a strong foundation for treating others.

O Order – Lots of physical affection is a good thing, and so is treating others with respect, but if the home is disorganized, cluttered, messy, dirty, chaotic, then the family fragrance will not be pleasant but will stink. Where there is a mess, uncleanness, and disarray, there is chaos and a lack of security and peace. Not only that, but a sense of personal shame on the child and the parents that blocks the demonstration of hospitality and get-togethers with others. The home environment should be one of a prevailing calm and a safe place that is emotionally restful. A messy home is one in which the head of the household is out of control. An ordered, tranquil environment is impossible to maintain if someone is not in control. In order to maintain order in the home, the three R's have to be in play:

Rules- without clearly defined rules anarchy will soon prevail. Everyone in the home must understand that certain things are expected to be done, and certain things will not be tolerated. There needs to be clear boundaries, if there is going to be the feeling of safety, security and self-confidence. When making rules follow these three guidelines: make the list short; major on the majors not the minors; be consistent.

Roles – Everyone in the family has a role to fill and a part to play, but if they are not intentionally identified and clarified, then everyone will either be forced into a role that may not be appropriate for them, or force somebody else to do the same. Each role comes with it's own set of responsibilities that have to be consistently carried out, and these have to be reinforced by mom and dad.

Rights – Every family has certain minimum rights, like the right of every family member to be listened to, voice their opinion, and express concerns, as long as these are done in respectful tone. This is why family conference tables are so important...

M Merriment – Laughter doeth good like a medicine, says the Proverbs. Home should be a place where

there is lots of laughter and play and fun. Dads are to be the ushers in of joy. Times of intentional hilarity need to be orchestrated and experienced. Lighten up. Don't take yourself and everything else so seriously. Practical jokes should abound.

A Affirmation – verbal affirmation and praise are chief identity builders for your child. Both are forms of encouragement. Coaching them to be all that they can be and to set and make their goals, are another form of encouragement. And so is being your child's major support group (Verbal blessings in our home).

5. How to repair damaged relationship with your child
 - a. Ephesians 6:4
 - b. Colossians 3:21
 - c.

#3: Passing On A Social Legacy

1. How our children relate to others when they are grown will likely reflect the way similar social issues were dealt with at home. Our sons will learn how to treat their wives by the way they watch their dad treat their mother. Our daughters will likewise learn how to treat their husbands (and be treated by them) from what they observe in their mom and dad's relationship. This will be true on all fronts, in their dealings with neighbors, teachers, bad drivers, authority figures, etc...
2. From you, their parents, they will learn lessons about honor and respect, reverence and courtesy, love and service, compassion and care, humility and social involvement. A social legacy involves passing onto your child insights "and strong social skills for cultivating healthy, stable relationships."⁴
3. Ledbetter and Bruner write –

"Those who learn to relate well to others have an edge in the game of life. Those who don't are doomed to mediocrity at best, and failure at worst."⁵

#4: Passing On A Clearly Defined Vision Of Manhood

1. Fourthly, and more specific to the training of young boys to men, I agree with Robert Lewis that there has to be a clearly defined vision for Biblical manhood. I have used his four factors for becoming a man in my church because they so encompass

⁴ Ibid, p. 78

⁵ Ibid, p. 79

the knighthood ideals so well. I did, however, add a fifth one, which Lewis covers in his book but not as one of the four factors (transcendent cause). The 5 factors that undergird and clearly define the vision of authentic Christian manhood are:

- #1. Reject Passivity (encourage your children to take the initiative)
 - #2. Accept Responsibility (you need to allow your children to grow up and handle their responsibilities, and master new challenges without rescuing them every time; what they start, make them finish without help or rescuing; the wheelbarrow incident)
 - #3. Lead Courageously (don't expect others to be self-motivated; lead them; call them to commitment)
 - #4. Compete for a Heavenly Reward
 - #5. Embrace a Transcendent Cause
2. Once a Father internalizes these principles that make up the vision for authentic Biblical Manhood, he must begin outlining how he will pass these values to his children. We have already talked at length about the need for a father to embrace the process of knighthood and the need to incorporate a knight's code of conduct in his own actions and behavior. Like everything else we intend to continue to be passed on, these 5 factors need to modeled, caught and taught in the moment, as life happens.

#5: Incorporate Ceremony, Rites of Passage, Symbols and Heraldry

1. The fifth principle that will help ensure your philosophy of Biblical manhood is passed down it to your future descendents, is to incorporate Rites of Passage, which include the use of Heraldry, symbols, meaningful jewelry, formal ceremony, creeds and crests, and a celebratory feast. These are important mostly because they help the individual remember the time, place and people involved in the rite of passage. They also have a sealing influence on both the individual going through them, as well as the participants who witness the event. Again, Deuteronomy 6 agrees with this concept.
2. Such ceremonies are common in our church, and I have to tell you, they are the highlights of my ministry. I have witnessed on many occasions, a tangible physical change come over a teenager on their rite of passage ceremony, where boys are presented with an actual fighting sword of their choice, and girls - some other significant piece of jewelry appropriate as a symbol for the sealing of the occasion and it's emphasis. As the charges and Troths of the Rite of Passage are read, and they answer in the affirmative each charge, a look of determination

comes over these kids. With their eyes set, they obviously take such moments seriously because they have paid a price for the right to be acknowledged. They have embraced the proverbial truth “humility comes before honor.”⁶ On almost every occasion, since starting the process of knighthood in my church many years ago, I have seen our philosophy of bringing our children to early maturity take place. It is amazing the depth of devotion and the severity of faith and discipline that these kids have.

3. Such rites of passage are needed today to mark the passages of time between childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood. And these ceremonies must be done in such a way that they will never be forgotten. Keep in mind that ceremonies and rites of passage are supposed to be costly and well planned if they are to be both memorable and valued. The costliness of them points to both the value of the person being honored, and the seriousness of what is being conferred and bestowed upon them.
4. Each family will of course, have to determine what they can afford to spend on each occasion, but with the view that the cost involved attaches value to the person and calls attention to the honor due them for their accomplishments. To not take the necessary time to adequately plan on such important events, nor to budget beforehand in order to meet the expenses of the event, is to inadvertently say to your youth that he/she and it, the ceremony and rite of passage, aren't very valuable to you. In the back of this book we itemize each of our symbols and titles, as well as give some sample charges and troths, creeds, and other ideas.
5. The signet ring and the hoopa and coronet as lasting symbols that outline one's legacy and pass it on

#6: Be Part of a Fraternity of Like-Minded Men

1. Every man needs to align himself with a band of brothers, a fraternity or community of godly men.
2. Listen dads, if your boy is to become a real man, and your girl a real lady, you are going to have to enlist the help of a community of men and their wives.
3. It's one thing for our children to hear their dad talk about a weighty subject; it's another thing for them to hear the same subject shared among a group of like-minded Christian men and women.

⁶ Proverbs 15:33b

4. A synergism of values and depth takes place amongst a comradery of Christian men.
5. A community of men expands the spiritual and moral resources of our children.
6. There is great security and assurance in knowing my sons can seek out other Christian men in this church and share their struggles and successes and hear from them the same godly counsel they would hear from me. This comes about when people are willing to align themselves with shared values, vision, and practices.
7. Many of us as families have been bonded together through the mystical power of ceremony and rites of passage and taking part in mentoring each others children.
8. You cannot build a godly enduring legacy alone. God never meant it to be done alone. Lets do it together. (our family's coat of arms)
9. By incorporating these six principle ways of passing the baton, including the passing down of spiritual, emotional and social legacies, and of a clear vision for manhood, incorporating the concept of the trial by ordeal, as well as the signing and sealing of all these things in various and sundry rites of passage and the giving of those symbols and regalia appropriate to the honor bestowed, including family crests and signet rings, etc, you will insure that your legacy makes it to your great great-grandchildren.
10. It has been said that the most important gift we can give our children are roots and wings. Roots give them stability and a sense of where they came from and who they are. Wings give them the freedom to exercise themselves according to what they have learned. If we give them roots but no wings, they will never reach their full potential. If they are given wings but no roots, like Icarus, they will fly too close to the sun, and plummet back into the lethal waves of spiritual and personal mediocrity. They need both roots and wings to become mature adults. Mature adults, by the way, accept the legacy of their father, and that there is something bigger than themselves that they are a part of; something bigger than themselves that is leading them and guiding them and helping them find meaning in life. They need not ever find themselves questioning who they are or what they are here for. This is why the golden ring that the blue knight is bestowed with, along with his family's crest engraved on it, is such an asset (not to mention the family crest itself) in passing something tangible and meaningful down the family line.

Next week we will conclude this series with one more way to pass on the baton of one's legacy and heritage, by talking about Passing on the Four "C"s of a Well Ordered Life.